



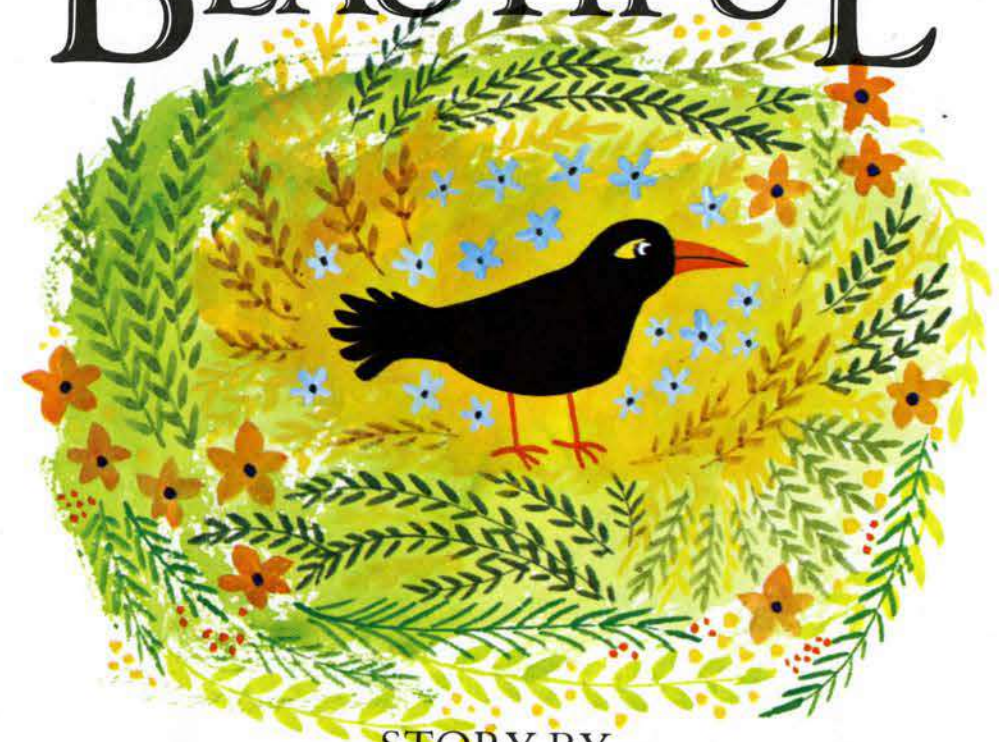
GREEN IS BEAUTIFUL

STORY BY
MARGARET ROGERS

ILLUSTRATED BY
BERNADETTE
WATTS

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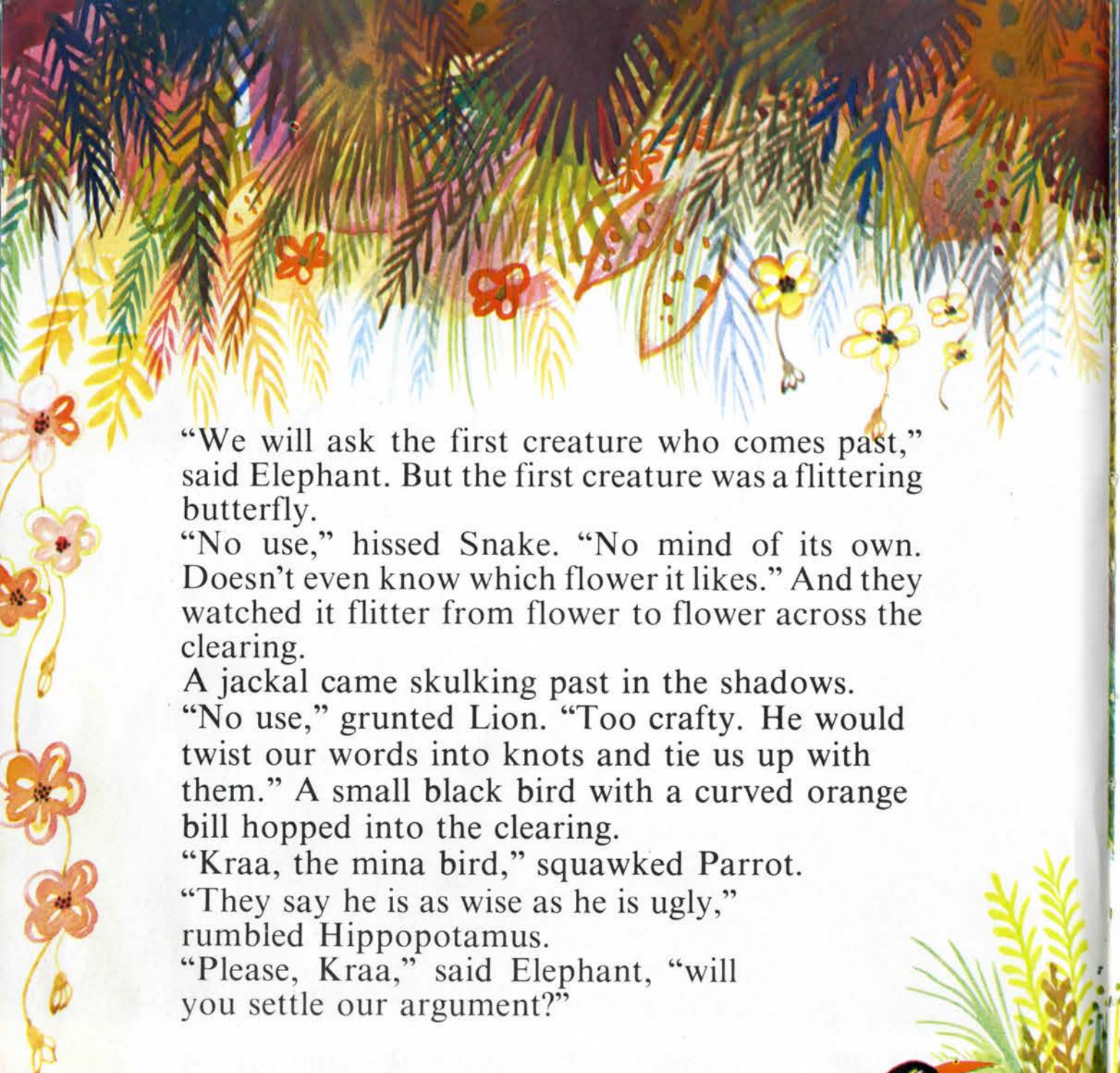
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The lords of the jungle sat in the clearing and argued. Lion, Hippopotamus, Snake, Elephant and Parrot — they sat in the clearing all day and argued. When the black curtain of the jungle night fell, they were still arguing.



"Tomorrow," said Elephant (and they could see the silver knives of his tusks), "tomorrow we must ask someone to settle the argument for us." The lords of the jungle met in the clearing next day: Lion, Hippopotamus, Snake, Elephant and Parrot.



"We will ask the first creature who comes past," said Elephant. But the first creature was a flittering butterfly.

"No use," hissed Snake. "No mind of its own. Doesn't even know which flower it likes." And they watched it flutter from flower to flower across the clearing.

A jackal came skulking past in the shadows.

"No use," grunted Lion. "Too crafty. He would twist our words into knots and tie us up with them." A small black bird with a curved orange bill hopped into the clearing.

"Kraa, the mina bird," squawked Parrot.

"They say he is as wise as he is ugly," rumbled Hippopotamus.

"Please, Kraa," said Elephant, "will you settle our argument?"



Kraa cocked his head on one side and looked at them with bead-bright eyes.

"That depends," he croaked, "on what your argument is."

The lords of the jungle all started to tell him together. Lion roared, Hippopotamus rumbled, Snake hissed, Elephant trumpeted and Parrot squawked.

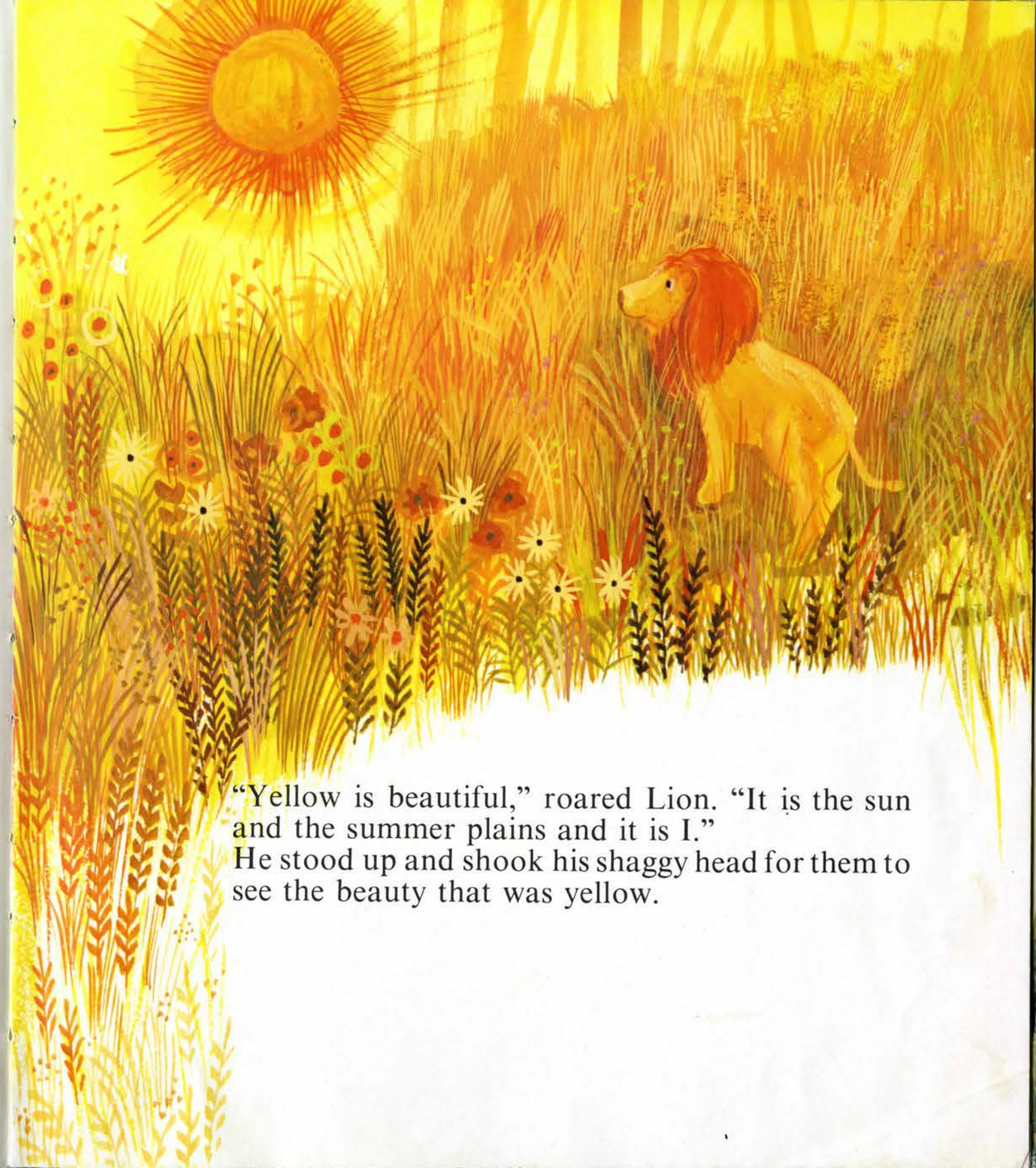
"KRAAAA!" said the mina bird, and held up one orange claw for silence. "Elephant asked me so Elephant shall tell me."

Elephant cleared his trunk and said, "We are arguing over which colour is the most beautiful of all."



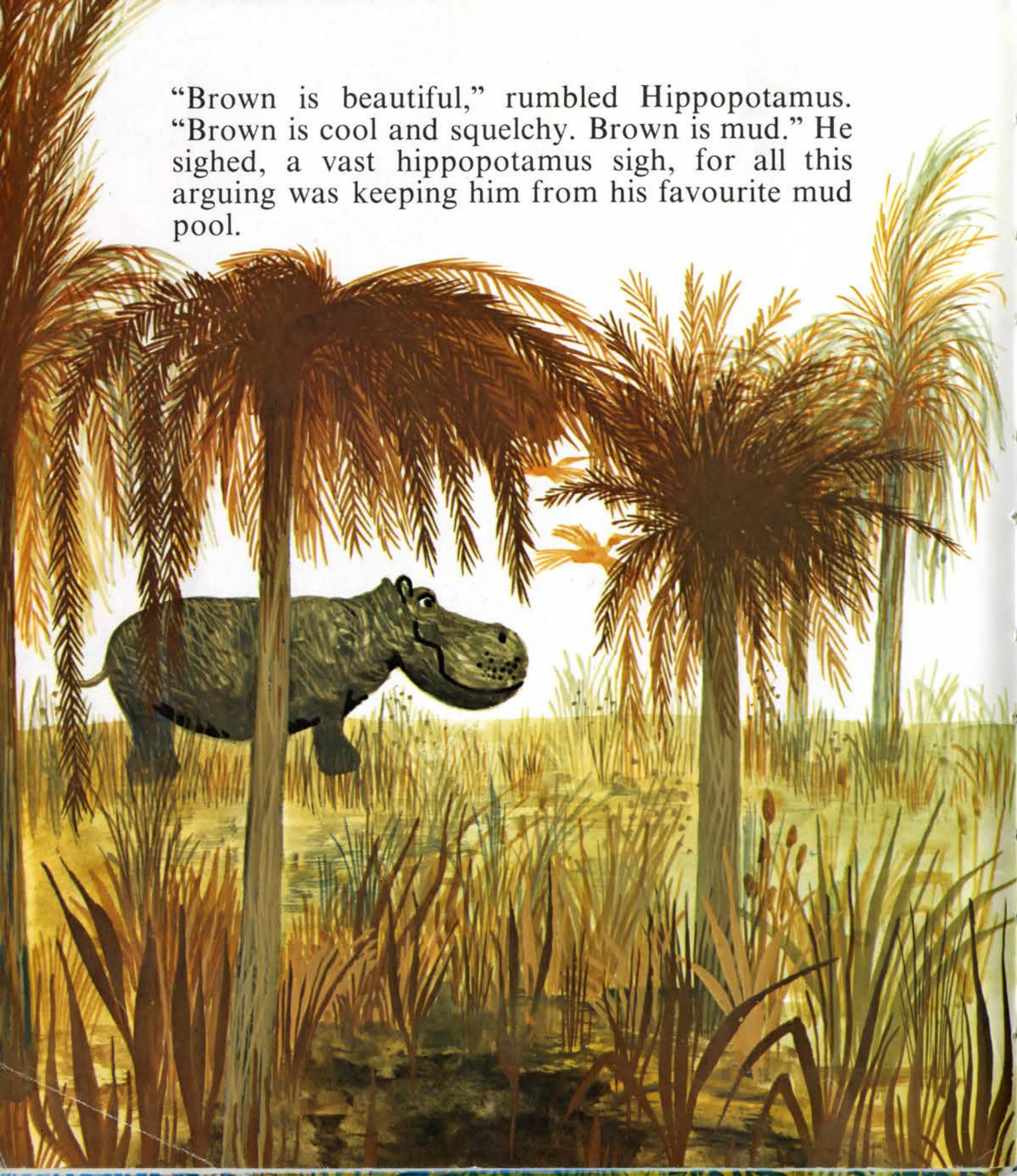


Snake hissed, "Green is beautiful. It is the grass and the leaves of the trees and the vines that dangle."
He hung himself like a vine from a nearby tree and swayed gently singing, "Green is beautiful and so am I."



"Yellow is beautiful," roared Lion. "It is the sun and the summer plains and it is I."
He stood up and shook his shaggy head for them to see the beauty that was yellow.

"Brown is beautiful," rumbled Hippopotamus. "Brown is cool and squelchy. Brown is mud." He sighed, a vast hippopotamus sigh, for all this arguing was keeping him from his favourite mud pool.



"Red and blue are beautiful," squawked Parrot. "How dull would be a world all green or all yellow! Or all *brown* — ugh! You need red and blue to brighten the world up," and he flashed his wings, flaunting the brightness of their red and blue.



"Grey is beautiful," said Elephant. "It is quiet..."
"Dull," squawked Parrot, "dull, dull, dull."
"Quiet," said Elephant firmly. "It is the colour of dignity and strength."

He curled his trunk round a young tree and plucked it effortlessly from the ground.

Kraa looked at them all; at green Snake, yellow Lion, brown Hippopotamus, red and blue Parrot and grey Elephant. He looked at them all with his bead-bright eyes and croaked, "You are all wrong. You have thought no further than the colour of your own skins. But, with the help of something which has no colour of its own, I will show you the most beautiful colours in the world."

Snake hissed, Lion roared, Hippopotamus rumbled, Parrot squawked and Elephant trumpeted. Kraa held up his orange claw for silence.

"It has no colour of its own, but it takes on all colours and makes them its own."





"You are talking in riddles," roared Lion. "How can anything have no colour and yet be all colours?"

Kraa winked one bead-bright eye.

"Without it," he said, "Snake's grass would not stay green; Hippopotamus's mud would vanish away; and yellow, red, blue, even elephant grey, would disappear."

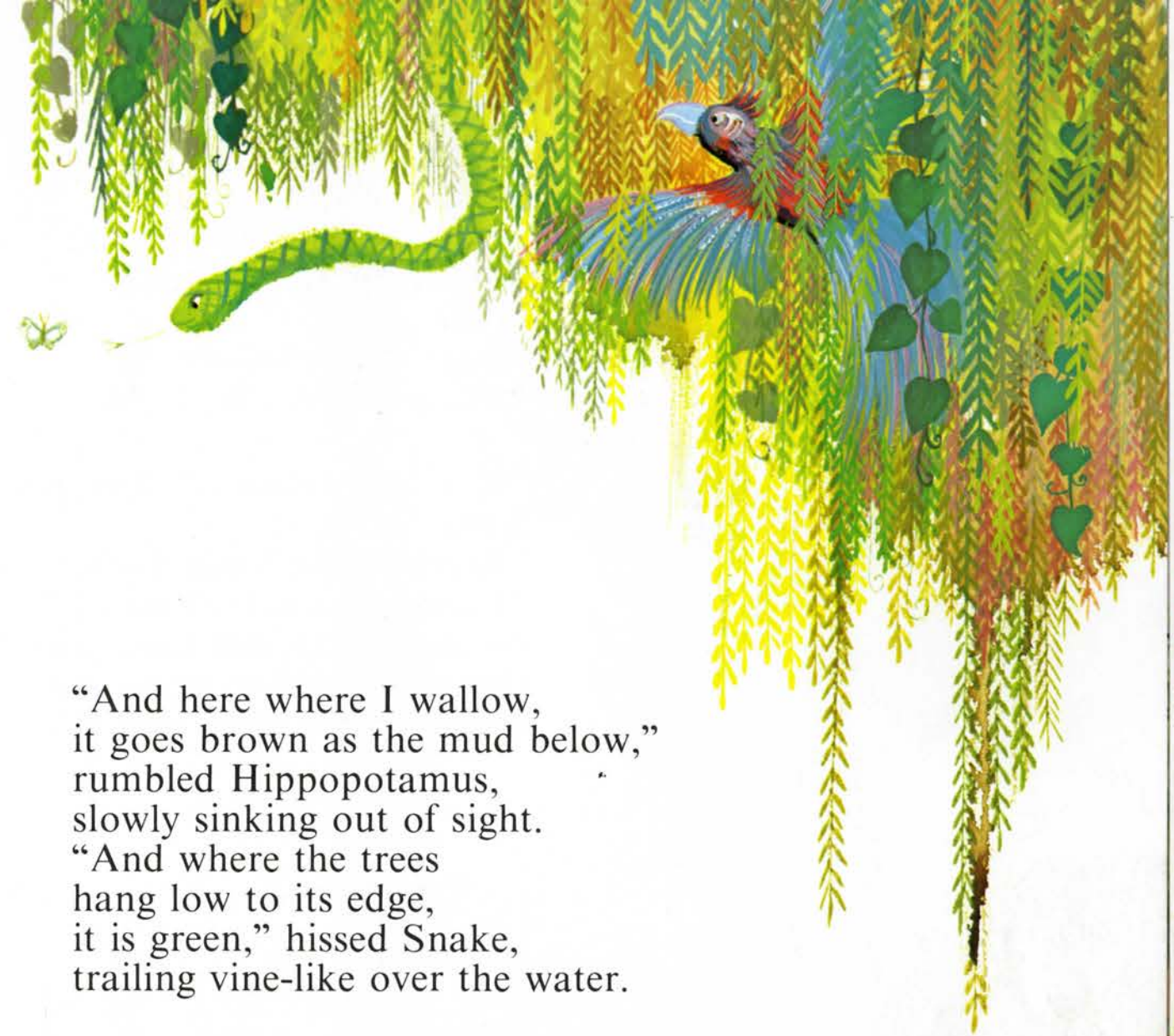


"Explain yourself," trumpeted Elephant, "or we shall wish we had asked the jackal after all."

"Follow me," croaked Kraa, "and I will show you." He led them out of the clearing, through the jungle pathways hung low with vines and treacherous with twisted roots, and out onto the shores of a lake.

"Water!" trumpeted Elephant. "That is what Kraa means. See, it has no colour of its own." He sucked up a trunkful and squirted it like a fountain back into the lake. It glistened and twinkled in the sun but it had no colour of its own.


"No colour and all colours," squawked Parrot. "See over there, where the sky is blue above, the water is blue beneath."



"And here where I wallow, it goes brown as the mud below," rumbled Hippopotamus, slowly sinking out of sight.

"And where the trees hang low to its edge, it is green," hissed Snake, trailing vine-like over the water.



An illustration on the left page of a children's book. A lion with a shaggy orange mane is leaning over a pond. The pond is filled with water and has a reflection of the lion. Several colorful fish are swimming in the pond, including a yellow one, a green one, a blue one, and a pink one. A small bird is perched on a branch above the pond. The background is filled with various plants and flowers in shades of purple, pink, and green.

"It is all colours," agreed Kraa.

"Except mine," said Lion.
"Lean over and look into it,"
croaked Kraa, and Lion saw
the water yellow where his
shaggy mane hung over it.

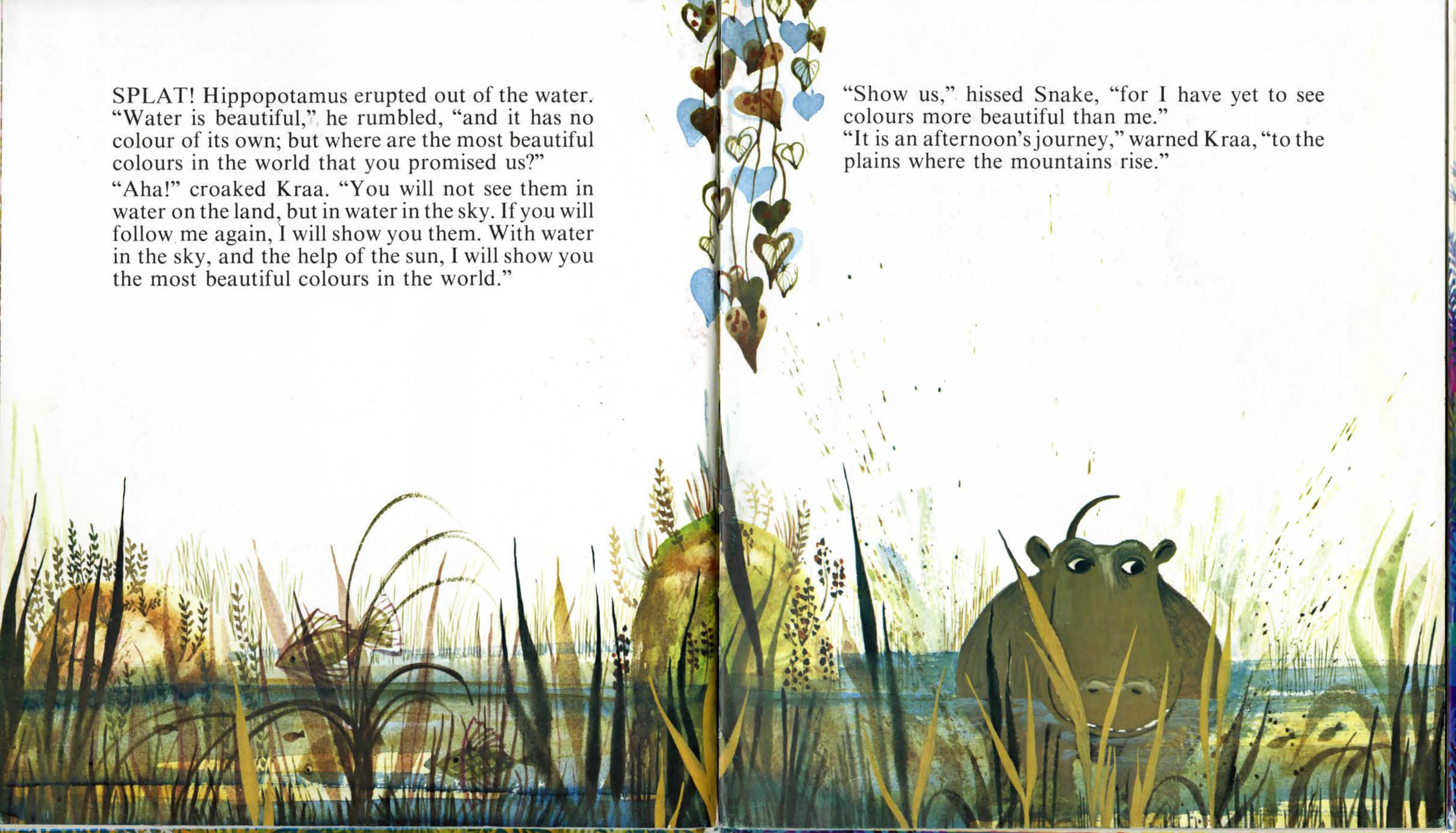


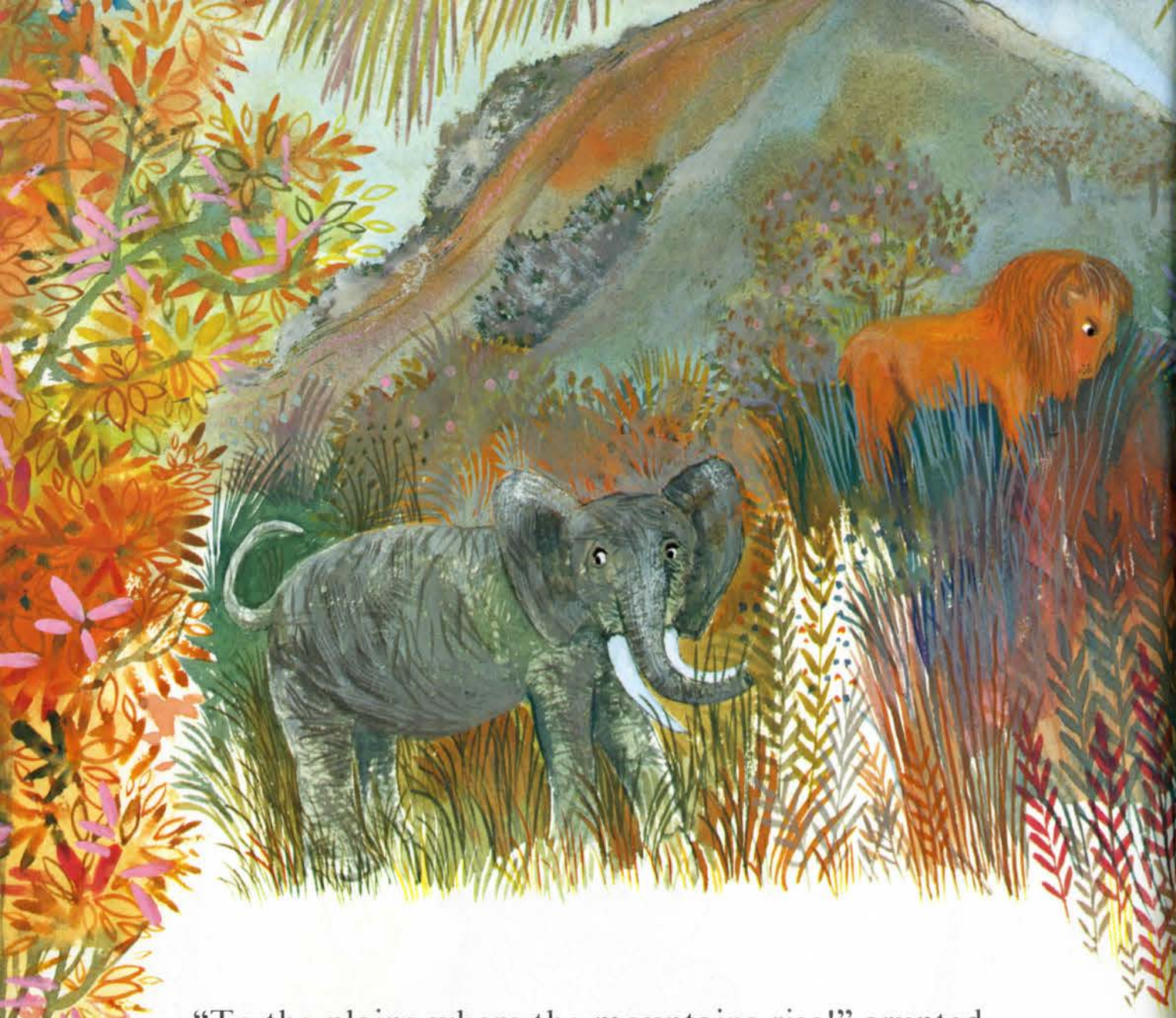
SPLAT! Hippopotamus erupted out of the water. "Water is beautiful," he rumbled, "and it has no colour of its own; but where are the most beautiful colours in the world that you promised us?"

"Aha!" croaked Kraa. "You will not see them in water on the land, but in water in the sky. If you will follow me again, I will show you them. With water in the sky, and the help of the sun, I will show you the most beautiful colours in the world."

"Show us," hissed Snake, "for I have yet to see colours more beautiful than me."

"It is an afternoon's journey," warned Kraa, "to the plains where the mountains rise."






“To the plains where the mountains rise!” grunted Hippopotamus. He sat down with a **SPLUNK** that shook the forest floor. “That is too far to walk, Kraa. Hippopotamuses aren’t made for walking.” Kraa’s orange bill curved into a smile.



“But they are made for swimming,” he croaked. “We will follow the river that leads from the lake to the plains.” He flew onto Elephant’s head. “Forward,” he cried, “to find the most beautiful colours in the world.”



All through the steaming afternoon they trudged along the river bank.
“I trust this is a good answer to our argument that you are taking us to see,” growled Lion, as his mane

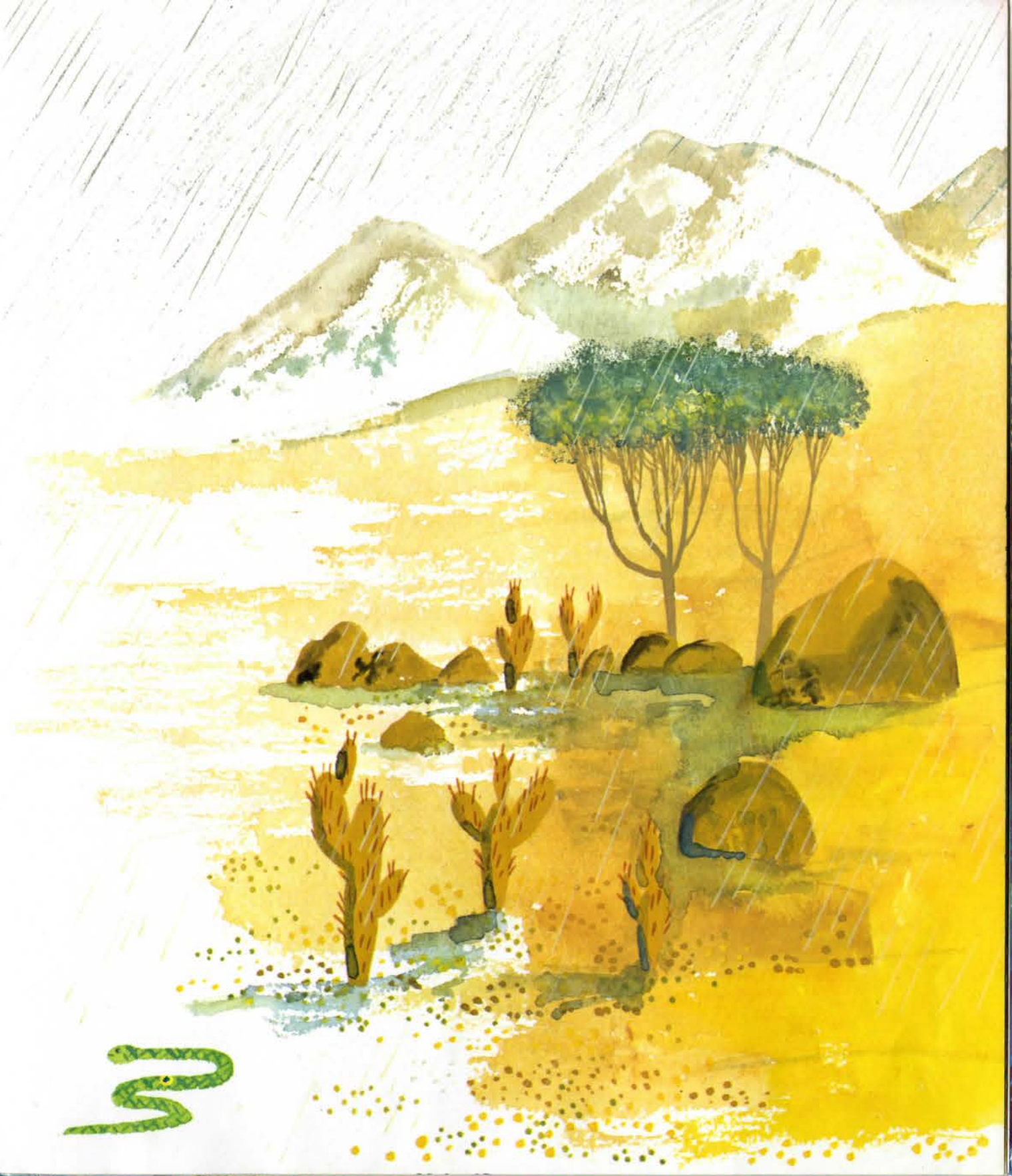
tangled in the vines for the hundredth time.
“Not just a good answer,” croaked Kraa as he pulled the vine free with his curving bill, “the only answer.”

Just as the lords of the jungle felt they could not lift another foot, or flap another wing, they emerged from the jungle onto a vast yellow plain, with the mountains climbing beyond.

"Here we are," croaked Kraa. "Now we can rest and watch the sun sink towards evening."

"But," hissed Snake, "where is your water? Here is only yellow grass and grey boulders and mountains in the distance."

"Patience," croaked Kraa. "We must wait till my water is ready for us."



"Wait!" squawked Parrot. "I hate waiting. Waste of time."

"Then we will *use* the time," croaked Kraa. "Let us imagine a world all green, like Snake: with a green sky and green ground; green parrots squawking in green trees; green elephants squirting green water; green giraffes nibbling green leaves; green gazelles grazing..."

"Stop!" roared Lion. "All that green — it's making me ill."

"Would a yellow world make you ill, Lion?" asked Kraa. "Yellow lions in yellow grass; yellow elephants eating yellow leaves; yellow hippopotamuses wallowing in..."

"Yellow mud!" snorted Hippopotamus. "Never! Yellow is too hot. Now brown..."


"Brown snakes basking in brown sunshine," mused Kraa. "Brown parrots flying through brown flowers..."

"Dull, dull, dull!" squawked Parrot. "Give me a red and blue world."

"Red and blue snakes," croaked Kraa with a grin, "striped like candy sticks. Elephants spotted all over in red and blue like..."

"Like the measles!" trumpeted Elephant. "Kraa, this is nonsense. Did you lead us all this way just to paint crazy pictures of a one-colour world?"





"No." Kraa shook his head solemnly. "I led you here to show you *that*." He pointed his orange claw over their heads. The lords of the jungle turned and gasped.

Arched in brilliant triumph over the mountains was a giant rainbow. "The sun and water in the sky together," murmured Kraa. "Sun shining through drops of rain."

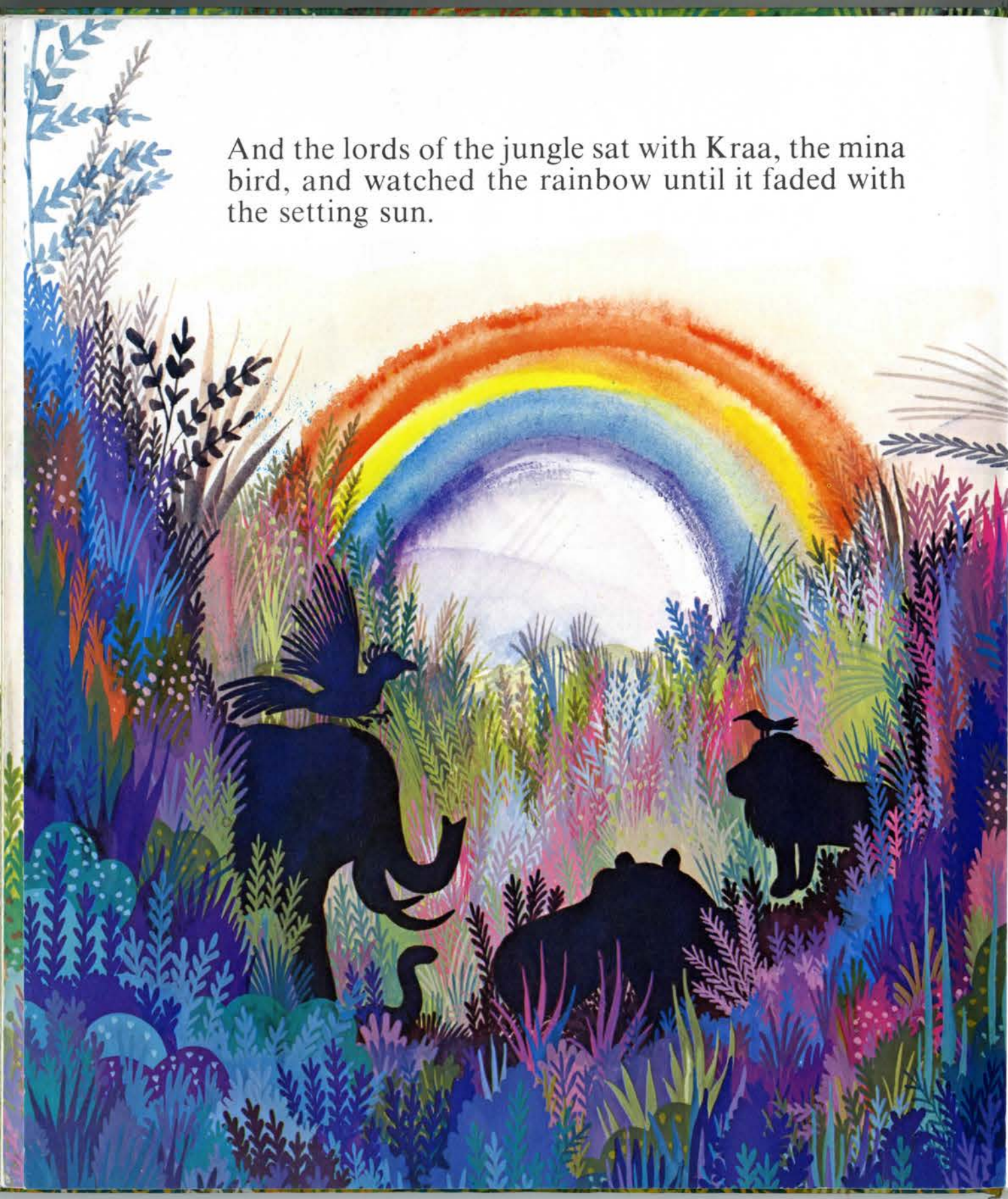
"Making all the colours of the rainbow," sighed Snake.

"All the colours of the *world*," trumpeted Elephant. "None more beautiful than the next, and each in its proper place."

"At last you have said it," croaked Kraa. "What is beautiful is not green, or grey, or yellow. It is green snakes, grey elephants, red and blue parrots, brown hippopotamuses and yellow lions, all living happily together in a world painted with all the colours of the rainbow. That is beautiful."



And the lords of the jungle sat with Kraa, the mina
bird, and watched the rainbow until it faded with
the setting sun.



Using the example of the rainbow, Kraa, the wise mina bird,
helps the jungle animals to settle their argument about the
most beautiful colour in the world.

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